Documentation of identity of ST families

*209. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any exercise of documentation of identity of Scheduled Tribe (ST) families, who have been residing on forest lands across the country for generation, has been carried out;

(b) if so, the details of finding thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the basis on which occupation by present inhabitants in forest lands are recognized/allowed; and

(e) the details of forest inhabiting ST families availing social welfare schemes *viz.,* Antodaya, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan etc. since 1999-2000, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PR. KYNDIAH): (a) and (b) The precise number of Scheduled Tribes families across the country residing on forest lands for generations is not available.

(c) and (d) The Ministry of Environment and Forests had issued guidelines on 18.09.1990 to the State/Union Territories for the verification of claims of traditional forest dwellers over forest land, survey of encroached lands to be carried out by the respective State/Union Territory Government in the manner as provided in the guidelines. The Ministry of Environment and Forests, *vide* its letter dated 21.12.2004, has requested all the State/Union Territory Governments not to resort to eviction of forest dwellers, including tribals, other than ineligible encroachers of forest land till complete survey is carried out for recognition of such people and their rights on forest land as provided in the guidelines dated 18.09.1990 issued under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Further instructions were issued on 17.10.2005 and 03.11.2005, including a direction to complete the survey and the entire process within a period of one year. Further, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has introduced the Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005 in the Lok Sabha on 13.12.2005, which seeks to recognise and vest the forest rights and occupation in forest land in forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes who have been residing in such forests for generations but whose rights could not be recorded.

(e) In view of reply given for (a) and (b) above, question does not arise.